DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 209 378 UD 021 729

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TITLE Title I Parent Involvement Evaluation. Report No. 77-19.
INSTITUTION Seattle Public Schools, Wash. Dept. of Management Information Services.
PUB DATE Aug 77
NOTE 21p.; For a related document, see UD 021 728.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Academic Achievement; *Compensatory Education; Compliance (Legal); Elementary Secondary Education; *Parent Participation; *Parent School Relationship; *Parent Student Relationship; Parent Teacher Cooperation; *Program Effectiveness; Program Evaluation
IDENTIFIERS Elementary Secondary Education Act Title I; *Seattle Public Schools WA

ABSTRACT

This report presents data gathered during the 1976-1977 school year to determine the extent, nature, benefits, and efficiency of parent involvement in Title I programs in Seattle, Washington. It was found that while Seattle's Title I programs complied with Federal, State, and district guidelines regarding parent involvement, the actual level of parent participation was low. In addition, more resources were directed toward parent involvement with staff members, resulting in little involvement between parents and students. Finally, no relationship was found between parent-involvement and student achievement. Recommendations are made in the report to improve the quantity and quality of parent participation in Title I programs. (APM)

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TITLE I PARENT INVOLVEMENT EVALUATION

REPORT NO. 77-19
AUGUST, 1977

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U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
EDUCATION & WELFARE
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author wishes to thank the Title I Evaluation Review Committee, Midge Brenner, Ed Cimler, Sue Corwin, and Jim Marchisio for their valuable contributions to this report. Acknowledgement is also given to Aline Parker and Cheri Stein whose help in the completion of this report was greatly appreciated.

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TITLE I PARENT INVOLVEMENT EVALUATION

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AUGUST, 1977

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ABSTRACT

Title I Parent Involvement Evaluation, Report No. 77-19 presents data gathered during the 1976-77 school year to determine the extent, nature, benefits, and efficiency of parent involvement in Title I programs. Title I programs are Federally funded programs aimed at remediating basic skill deficiencies in underachieving students. The Federal, State, and District Title I guidelines accompanying these programs require parent involvement. Based on information contained in this report, the following conclusions were made about Seattle's 1976-77 Title I parent involvement:

1. The District's emphasis in the Title I parent involvement program has been focused on guideline compliance, not student achievement.

2. Overall, very little parent involvement existed in Seattle's Title I programs.

3. Most available resources were spent on parents interacting with staff persons on issues not directly relating to student achievement, resulting in little involvement between parents and students.

4. The parent involvement studied did not relate to student achievement as measured by standardized tests.

5. The Title I parent involvement budget was either insufficient or misdirected to accomplish both full compliance and improvement in student achievement scores.

In order to try to offer a parent program that is more effective for Seattle's Title I students, this report recommended that the District:

1. Take steps to increase the amount of parent involvement in Title I.

2. Direct this increased involvement toward activities directly relating to student academic achievement.

3. Continue efforts to bring parent involvement in Seattle's Title I programs into full compliance.

4. Examine the parent involvement portion of the Title I budget and make necessary changes to insure both full compliance and improvement of student achievement scores.

Possible suggestions of new ideas that could be included in a parent involvement program are in the Recommendations section at the end of this report.

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INTRODUCTION

Federal, State, and District guidelines require the involvement of parents and the establishment of Parent Advisory Committees (PACs) for Title I programs. During the 1976-77 school year, PACs were established at most Title I program sites in Seattle. Each local PAC sent a representative to the Districtwide Compensatory Education Parent Advisory Committee (CEPAC). Throughout the year, parents, Title I teachers, principals, and administrators worked on PAC organization and parent involvement. The District needed to determine the extent, nature, benefits, and efficiency of parent involvement in Title I programs. To do this, data on local PACs (see Appendix A) were collected at the end of the school year, a parent survey (see Appendix B) was sent to the parents or guardians of all 5,000 Title I students in February 1977, and data on all identifiable kinds of parent involvement (see Appendix C) were collected throughout the year. This evaluation analyzed that data and addressed the following questions:

1. Did Seattle's 1976-77 Title I programs comply with Federal, State, and District guidelines governing parent involvement?

2. How much parent involvement was there in Seattle's 1976-77 Title I programs?

3. What type of parent involvement took place in Seattle's 1976-77 Title I programs?

4. What was the relationship between Seattle's Title I parent involvement and Title I student achievement?

5. What was the cost of Seattle's 1976-77 Title I parent involvement?

FINDINGS

QUESTION #1: Did Seattle's 1976-77 Title I programs comply with Federal, State, and District guidelines* governing parent involvement?

Presentation of Data

1. The District established the Compensatory Education Parent Advisory Council (CEPAC) to meet the Federal and State requirement of establishing a districtwide parent advisory committee.

2. Forty-one (all but three) buildings met the Federal and State requirement of establishing a local PAC.

3. Forty of the forty-four PACs elected a CEPAC representative as required by the Federal guidelines.

4. Fifty percent of the PACs met the District requirement of meeting at least six times during the school year. The average number of PAC meetings was 4.7.

5. Five programs (11%) met the Federal, State, and District requirement of notifying parents of their child's participation in Title I and the District requirement of sending three progress reports home.

6. Forty of the PACs satisfied the District's record keeping requirements.

7. Seattle's Title I programs satisfactorily met the District's defined purpose of the PACs as evidenced by the fact that almost 66% of PAC meetings were devoted to Title I planning and implementation activities.

Conclusions

1. During 1976-77 the District made progress on its Federal, State, and District Title I parent involvement compliance requirements.

2. Overall the District was very close to full compliance with all guidelines governing parent involvement in Title I except the following:

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*The sources of the guideline requirements are:

1. September 1976 Federal Register, Vol. 41, No. 189, Section 116a.35.
2. February 1975 Washington Administrative Code, Sections 392-98-035, 392-98-045, and 392-98-050.
3. Districtwide Comprehensive Elementary and Secondary Education Act Title I program for 1976-77, Section B.

a. The requirement that local buildings establish PACs.

b. The requirement of PACs to meet six times during the year.

c. The requirement to send four notices home to the parents.

QUESTION #2: How much parent involvement was there in Seattle's 1976-77 Title I programs?

The data presented in number 2 below and the conclusions, in part, are based on the 400 (8%) surveys returned. Because of the low return rate, caution should be taken in interpreting these responses.

Presentation of Data

1. The average attendance at PAC meetings (both parents and staff) was ten. This figure is somewhat inflated due to the fact that most PACs had very low attendance (two or three parents) at their business meetings, yet attracted a large group of parents (as many as ninety were reported) to their annual social event, also a PAC meeting.

2. Of the parents who responded to the survey:

   a. Thirty-six percent stated they had never visited a Title I classroom; forty percent visited a Title I classroom once; twenty-four percent visited more than once.

   b. Twenty percent indicated they never helped their children with homework; forty percent helped occasionally; forty percent helped their children on a weekly or daily basis.

   c. Fifty percent said they never attended a PAC meeting; forty-five percent attended one to four meetings; five percent attended more than four.

   d. Eighty percent responded that they had contact at least once with the teacher.

Of the survey responses, 66% indicated no participation in the activities available; 12% indicated participation once or twice in a few of the activities; 16% indicated participation quite often in most all activities; and 6% indicated a lot of participation in some of the activities.

Conclusions

1. Overall parent involvement in Seattle's 1976-77 Title I programs was extremely low:

   a. Although most schools established PACs, parent attendance at these PAC meetings was very low.

   b. Of the survey respondents, very few were actively involved with Title I.

2. If the District wants a high level of parent involvement, it needs to examine its methods of obtaining that involvement.

QUESTION #3: What type of parent involvement took place in Seattle's 1976-77 Title I programs?

Presentation of Data

1. Parent involvement was classified into two basic categories. Appendix C lists activities that made up parent/staff and parent/student involvement.

   a. Parent/Staff involvement was the interaction between parents and teachers, principals, or administrators. Most of this interaction related to compliance issues (discussed in Question 1) or activities not directly related to student achievement.

   b. Parent/Student involvement was the interaction between parents and students. Most of this interaction related directly to student achievement.

2. Of the 347 PAC meetings held among the schools, almost two-thirds of those meetings were completely parent/staff interactions not relating directly to student achievement.

3. Of ten survey items indicating both types of parent involvement, twice as many parents said they were involved in parent/staff interactions than were involved in parent/student interactions.

Conclusions

1. Most of the parent involvement was parent/staff, not parent/student.

2. The District emphasized involving parents in Title I programs for the primary purpose of complying with Federal guidelines, not to directly assist in improving the academic achievement of students.

QUESTION #4: What was the relationship between Seattle's Title I parent involvement and Title I student achievement?

For analysis of this question, student achievement was defined as the amount of progress Title I students made from the beginning of the year to the end of the year in reading and math on the Metropolitan Achievement Test. Variables were also added together to make one parent/staff indicator and one parent/student indicator for each school. (See Appendix C.)

Presentation of Data

The following correlations were not significant:

1. Individual parent involvement variables correlated with reading and math achievement: reading, $r = -.10$ to $r = +.10$; math, $r = -.25$ to $r = +.18$.

2. The parent/staff indicator correlated with reading and math achievement: reading, $r = +.08$; math, $r = +.12$.

3. The parent/student indicator did not correlate with reading and math achievement: reading, $r = .00$; math, $r = -.07$.

Conclusion

There was no significant relationship between the parent involvement studied and Title I student achievement. Three possibilities may have accounted for this:

1. Student achievement may not be related to parent involvement.

2. When parent involvement was correlated with Title I student achievement on a per school basis, there were no significant relationships because parent involvement was so low.

3. All existing parent involvement activities may not have been identified.

QUESTION #5: What was the cost of Seattle's 1976-77 Title I parent involvement?

Presentation of Data

1. Documented direct expenditures for the 1976-77 school year were as follows:

a.	Activities - Banquets and Parent Awareness Day	$ 951
b.	Local PAC budgets for meetings ($25 per PAC was allocated)	475
c.	"Parent Guide" pamphlet	497
d.	Printing and mailing	155
e.	Babysitting	27
f.	Personnel (included a portion of three District staff persons plus casual employees as they were needed)	11,598
	TOTAL	$13,703

2. Less than fifty percent of available monies for PAC meetings was spent.

3. Eighty-five percent of the budget was spent on personnel costs.

4. About ninety-five percent of the parent involvement budget was spent on parent/staff related activities not directly affecting student achievement scores.

5. Less than one percent of the total Title I budget ($2.35 million) was spent on parent involvement.

Conclusion

The current budget for parent involvement has resulted in a fairly high degree of compliance with Federal, State, and District parent involvement guidelines, despite the fact that quite small numbers of parents participated. If the District were to seek to obtain any impact on student achievement from its parent involvement efforts, it is likely that both the nature and the amount of parent involvement expenditures would have to change.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This evaluation has shown that:

1. Overall very little parent involvement existed in Seattle's Title I programs.

2. Most available resources were spent on parent/staff involvement, resulting in little parent/student involvement.

3. The District's emphasis in the Title I parent involvement program has been on guideline compliance, not student related issues.

4. The parent involvement studied did not relate to student achievement as measured by standardized tests.

5. The Title I parent involvement budget expenditures were either insufficient or misdirected to accomplish both full compliance and improvement in student achievement scores.

The District is required by Federal, State, and District regulations to involve parents in its Title I program. It is a common assumption that parent involvement has a positive effect on student achievement. Studies on parent involvement in Seattle's Title I program have not been able to support this assumption. This could be due to the fact that:

1. The assumption is false, or

2. Parent involvement in Title I is too low to influence achievement scores, or

3. The type of parent involvement identified in Title I (parent/staff) does not help achievement scores.

In order to try to offer a parent program that is more effective for Seattle's Title I students and to test the above assumption, it is recommended that the District:

1. Take steps to increase the amount of parent involvement in Title I.

2. Direct this increased involvement toward parent/student activities directly related to academic achievement.

3. Continue efforts to bring parent involvement in Seattle's Title I programs into full compliance.

4. Examine the parent involvement portion of the Title I budget and make necessary changes to insure both full compliance and improvement of student achievement scores.

Based on informal conversations with parents, staff, and District administrators, the following suggestions are offered as possible elements of a parent involvement program.

Suggestions for All Title I Programs

1. Require written parent commitment and involvement for entry into the program and possible removal from the program if that involvement stops.

2. At PAC meetings, increase parent/student activities that are relevant to the education of students, i.e., educational game making sessions or student presentations.

3. To the section covering PACs in the District's Title I guidelines, add the following: "At least four of the six meetings shall involve students or activities related to students."

4. Develop a program to increase parents' skills in helping their children learn.

5. Require at least two staff home visits per year to help parents learn how to reinforce with their children the efforts of the Title I program.

6. Use a CEPAC meeting as a forum for exchanging ideas on successful parent/student interactions. Print and distribute this information to PACs.

Suggestions for Selected Title I Programs

Several special parent involvement programs emphasizing parent/student interactions could be piloted at one school each, in place of the required PAC. One program could be a home tutoring program. It might include a procedure to determine if intensive home tutoring increases achievement as follows:

1. Volunteer experimental and control groups of students and parents would be established.

2. Parents in the experimental group would commit themselves to working with their children at home on objectives assigned by the teacher. The control group would carry on normally, without special instruction.

3. Parents in the experimental group would also commit themselves to meeting with the teacher at least monthly for intensive training and further student assignments.

4. Parents would keep records of home tutoring sessions; teachers would maintain records of parent/teacher meetings and student achievement.

5. Evaluation of the project would determine if intensive parent/student home tutoring increased students' achievement. The non-participating students and parents would form one control group, and other Title I schools not involved in a special program could form a second control group.

6. Resources necessary to carry out such programs should be provided from the Title I budget.

APPENDIX A

PAC Information Collected

Data on the following variables were collected on each PAC in the district:

- Number of PAC meetings held
- Number attending PAC meetings
- Number of the following types of PAC meetings:
  1. Presentation by staff
  2. Presentation or involvement with students
  3. Educational material or game making session
  4. Social of some kind
  5. Planning session
  6. Information-giving session
- How many reports were sent home to the parents
- Whether or not by-laws were on record

(Eval)

TITLE I PARENT PARTICIPATION SURVEY

Your responses to this survey will be used in determining how much parent participation there is in Title I and what specific parent activities help increase student achievement. Your assistance in completing this survey will be greatly appreciated. Please check the appropriate answer for each question.

Is your child participating in a Title I class? /___/ Yes /___/ No

If "yes," continue; if "no," stop here and return survey.

1. Have you visited your child's Title I classroom this year?

   /___/ Not yet /___/ Once /___/ Monthly /___/ Weekly /___/ Daily

2. If you have visited your child's Title I classroom, which of the following activities were you involved in? (Check as many as apply.)

   /___/ Observation /___/ General clerical tasks /___/ Preparation of learning materials

   /___/ Presenting material to the entire class /___/ Working with small groups

   /___/ Tutoring on a one-to-one basis /___/ Other:_____

3. During this year, have you helped your child with Title I assignments at home?

   /___/ Not yet /___/ Occasionally /___/ Once or twice a week /___/ Nightly

4. How often have you attended your school's Title I Parent Advisory Committee meetings this year?

   /___/ Never /___/ Once /___/ 2-4 times /___/ More than 4 times

5. Have you participated in policy development or planning for your child's Title I program this year?

   /___/ Haven't been asked /___/ Once /___/ Occasionally /___/ Regularly

6. How often have you had contact (either by phone or in writing) with your child's Title I teacher this year?

   /___/ Never /___/ Once /___/ 2-4 times /___/ More than 4 times

7. Have you received a report on your child's progress in his or her Title I program?

   /___/ Yes /___/ No

8. Please print the name of your child's school in the space provided. SCHOOL_____

Thank you for completing this survey. Please mail in the envelope provided by March 18, 1977, so that your answers may be included in the study.

Eval.

APPENDIX C

Categories of Parent Involvement

Parent/Staff

Below are examples of activities that made up parent/staff involvement in Title I referred to in Question #3.

Values for each dotted item below were added together to form the parent/staff indicator used in Question #4.

- Number of the following types of PAC meetings held during the year (one PAC meeting may be counted more than once):
  1. Presentations by staff
  2. Planning sessions
  3. Information-giving sessions
- Number of classroom visits by parents when they were involved in the following activities:
  1. Observation
  2. Working on clerical tasks
- Number of PAC meetings attended by parents as reflected in the parent participation survey.
- Number of Title I PAC policy development and planning meetings attended according to each survey respondent.
- Number of contacts with the Title I teacher.

Parent/Student

Below are examples of activities that made up parent/student involvement in Title I referred to in Question #3.

Values for each dotted item below were added together to form the parent/student indicator used in Question #4.

- Number of the following types of PAC meetings held during the year (one PAC meeting may be counted more than once):

  1. Presentations or involvement with students

  2. Educational material or game making sessions

  3. Socials

- Number of classroom visits by parents when they were involved in the following activities:

  1. Preparing learning materials

  2. Presenting material to the entire class

  3. Working with small groups

  4. Tutoring

- Number of times parents helped students with homework.